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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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SUBJECT: "TIPS FOR FOOD-SHOPPERS AND FOOD-PLANNERS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A. and the Consumers' Counsel, A.A.A.

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January is the month of the year for making plans and nowadays many forward-looking families even make food plans in January for the year ahead. Of course, you can't plan every single dish for every single menu 365 days ahead. But if you live on a farm, you can plan your garden and your canning, you can plan your meat and egg and poultry supply, and also plan what foods you will need to buy to supplement those you produce yourself.

If you live in the city, you can plan to make the most of foods when they are plentiful and low in cost. You can plan to keep in touch with market news of foods as they come in season and know which food crops are likely to be large and which crops may be smaller than average.

Today I have some predictions to help you with your food plans for 1940. Department of Agriculture economists have made some notes on the outlook for various foods during the coming year.

Here's what they predict about meats: The total supplies of meat during 1940 will probably be considerably larger than in 1939. The big increase is in pork. About the same amount of beef and lamb will be on the market but much more pork, and also more poultry. During the first half of this year more poultry and beef will be on the market during the first half of last year, but during the last half of 1940 supplies of pork and beef will be smaller.

Now about eggs. More eggs predicted for 1940. More eggs and larger laying flocks. (Get ready for angel food cake and omelet and souffle!)

What about dairy products during 1940? During the winter total supplies of dairy products will be smaller than a year ago. But milk production may not differ much from the winter of '39. Stocks of dairy products are smaller than a year ago.

The United States has the reputation of being one of the fruit-eating countries of the world. What about fresh fruit prospects for the year? Apple supplies during the first half of 1940 may not differ much from last year. Grapefruit will be plentiful. Last year the grapefruit crop made a record in size. This year's is the second largest production. As for oranges, they'll be as plentiful as last year when oranges made a record. Not quite so many lemons as in '39 but still the third largest crop of lemons on record.

Now for some predictions about canned vegetables. The total supplies of canned vegetables for the 1939 and '40 seasons are considerably smaller than supplies of the past two seasons, but they are still more than the amounts used in recent years. About the same amount of canned tomatoes are coming on the market but fewer cans of peas and corn and string beans.

From all reports, this is the year to eat nuts if you like them. Marked increases over '39 are in prospect for almonds, walnuts, filberts and pecans. Last fall's crop of filberts was the largest on record. And the almond and walnut crops were the second largest on record.

The prospect for dried fruits will please the fruit-eaters. The total supplies of dried fruit for the first half of 1940 may be larger than last year. Considerably more dried fruit than this country generally uses. Prunes and raisins won't be so plentiful as last year but dried apples and apricots will be more plentiful.

As for canned fruits, more of it may be coming on the market this year. You'll probably find more canned cherries on the grocery shelves but fewer cans of peaches and pears.

Speaking of fruits reminds me to tell you that the first strawberries of the season have already left the Florida strawberry beds and started for market. More strawberries will be coming on the market from now on. Heavy shipments of berries usually don't get underway until late March or April. Most strawberries marketed in January or February or March come from Florida. Then in late March Louisiana berries begin to come in. Louisiana is the largest strawberry producing State.

But let me get back to more food predictions for the year ahead. Here's a note on fats and oils. Supplies of fats and oils will be considerably larger than last year and may be the largest on record. Not so much cottonseed oil is predicted but much more lard and other fats and oils.

Here's a prediction about dried beans and rice. Not quite so many dried beans on the market as last year but more rice during the first half of this year anyway.

Finally, a note about wheat. During the first half of 1940 supplies of wheat appear to be more than ample for use in this country as well as for exporting. A large carryover of wheat at the end of the marketing season in June is expected.

That completes the market news except to tell you again the foods so abundant in supply that they are on the official list of surplus foods: butter, eggs, apples, fresh pears, oranges, grapefruit, raisins, dried prunes, dry beans, rice, onions, wheat flour, whole wheat flour, corn meal, hominy grits and pork products including lard.

That's all the news for today.

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